GCSE

English Specification

OCR GCSE in English   J350

April 2014

Contents

Vertical black lines indicate a significant change to the previous printed version.

1 Introduction to GCSE English

1.1   Overview of OCR GCSE English

Unit A641	Reading literary texts
Controlled assessment 20% of GCSE English 40 marks (AO2: 20%)	Candidates respond to three **tasks:** **one** on a play by Shakespeare, **one** on Prose or Literary Non-Fiction and **one** on Poetry. In studying Prose or Literary Non-Fiction and Poetry, centres must meet the further requirement that **one** of the texts must be from the English, Welsh or Irish literary heritage, and one from a different culture or tradition.

Plus

Unit A642	Imaginative Writing
Controlled assessment 20% of GCSE English 40 marks (AO3: 20%)	Candidates respond to two linked continuous writing responses on **one** of the following areas of study: Media or Text Development.

Plus

Unit A680	Information and ideas
Written exam 60% of GCSE English 80 marks Section A: 40 marks Section B: 40 marks (AO2: 30%, AO3: 30%)	**Section A: Non-fiction and media** Responses to unseen authentic passages: Candidates answer all questions. **Section B: Writing** One continuous writing response: Candidates choose **one** task from a choice of two tasks.
Plus	
Unit A640	Speaking and listening
Controlled assessment This unit does not contribute to the GCSE grade, but entry is mandatory for GCSE certification. 40 marks (AO1)	Candidates respond to **three activities:** • a drama-focused activity • a group activity • an individual extended contribution. **One** of the three activities must be in a real-life context in and beyond the classroom.

1.2 Overview of texts – GCSE English Set Text List

Candidates study three texts: **one** on a play by Shakespeare, **one** on Prose or Literary Non-Fiction and **one** on Poetry.

In studying Prose or Literary Non-Fiction and Poetry, centres must meet the further requirement that **one** of the texts must be from the English, Welsh or Irish literary heritage, and **one** from a different culture or tradition.

Drama

William Shakespeare:

- *Romeo and Juliet*
- *Julius Caesar*

Poetry

Selected Poems:

- Wilfred Owen (Literary Heritage)
- Carol Ann Duffy (Different Culture or Tradition/Contemporary)
- Benjamin Zephaniah (Different Culture or Tradition/Contemporary)

Prose

- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (Literary Heritage)
- *The Withered Arm and other Wessex Tales* by Thomas Hardy (Literary Heritage)
- *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck (Different Culture or Tradition/Contemporary)
- *Tsotsi* by Athol Fugard (Different Culture or Tradition/Contemporary)

Literary Non-Fiction

- *Notes from a Small Island* by Bill Bryson (Different Culture or Tradition/Contemporary)
- *The Kindness of Strangers* by Kate Adie (Different Culture or Tradition/Contemporary)

OCR will supply a free anthology which includes poetry selections for use in the controlled assessment unit A641.

1.3 Guided learning hours

GCSE English requires 120–140 guided learning hours in total.

1.4   Aims and learning outcomes

This specification in English encourages candidates to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study. It should prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices, to use language to participate effectively in society and employment and to develop their enthusiasm for reading.

This specification in English enables candidates to:

- demonstrate skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing necessary to communicate with others confidently, effectively, precisely and appropriately

- express themselves creatively and imaginatively

- understand the patterns, structures and conventions of written and spoken English

- select and adapt speech and writing to different situations and audiences

- understand how variations in spoken and written language relate to identity and cultural diversity

- become critical readers of a range of texts, including multimodal texts

- use reading to gain access to knowledge and to develop their own skills as writers

- understand that texts from the English, Welsh and Irish literary heritage have been influential and significant over time and explore the meaning of these today

- understand how literature from other cultures is influential

- connect ideas, themes and issues, drawing on a range of texts.

1.5   Prior learning

Candidates entering this course should have achieved a general educational level equivalent to National Curriculum Level 3, or an Entry 3 at Entry Level within the National Qualifications Framework.

2 Content of GCSE English

2.1 Unit A641: *Reading Literary Texts*

This is a controlled assessment unit.

Candidates study three texts:

- a play by Shakespeare
- a Prose or Literary Non-Fiction text
- a Poetry text.

In studying Prose or Literary Non-Fiction and Poetry, centres must meet the further requirement that **one** of the texts must be from the English, Welsh or Irish literary heritage, and **one** from a different culture or tradition.

Choice of Texts:

- Centres can **either** choose from the set texts listed below **or** they can choose their own text.

- The set text list will be reviewed by OCR every two years.

Where centres choose their own text, they must ensure that the text studied is of length and quality comparable to other set texts in the GCSE suite of English specifications, and suitable for analysis by Key Stage 4 students with regard to:

- language and structure
- different interpretations
- culture and tradition.

Centres may refer to the OCR Controlled Assessment Consultancy service for additional guidance.

Set Text List

Drama: William Shakespeare	**Poetry: Selected Poems**
• Romeo and Juliet • Julius Caesar	• Carol-Ann Duffy • Benjamin Zephaniah • Wilfred Owen There are 15 poems per poet in the OCR Anthology. Centres choose **one** poet to study.

Literary Non-Fiction	**Prose**
• Notes from a Small Island by Bill Bryson • The Kindness of Strangers by Kate Adie	• *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck • *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen • *Tsotsi* by Athol Fugard • *The Withered Arm and other Wessex tales* by Thomas Hardy

Candidates respond to three tasks from the following choice:

- themed Tasks which allow centres the opportunity to study texts of their own choice or may be used for the texts in the Set Text List above;

- tasks set specifically on the texts in the Set Text List.

Tasks will be set by OCR and will provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their ability to fulfil the assessment objective for Reading – AO2.

Candidates should be able to:

- understand how meaning is constructed through words, sentences, and whole texts, recognising and responding to the effects of language variation

- evaluate the ways in which texts may be interpreted differently according to the perspective of the reader

- read a rich range of prose, poetry and drama

- understand how texts from the literary heritage have been influential and significant over time

- explore how texts from different cultures and traditions may reflect or influence values and assumptions

- show an understanding of texts in their social, cultural and historical contexts in this unit.

2.2   Unit A642: *Imaginative Writing*

This is a controlled assessment unit.

Candidates should be able to write accurately and fluently, for a range of contexts and for a range of purposes:

- choosing content and adapting style and language to a wide range of forms, media, contexts, audiences and purposes

- adapting form to a range of styles and genres.

Candidates can choose from the following two areas:

- Media

OR

- Text Development.

Candidates respond to **two** imaginative writing tasks.

Tasks will be set by OCR and will provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their ability to fulfil the assessment objective for Writing − AO3.

Candidates are required to respond to **one** core task, and **one** linked task, from a choice of three linked tasks.

2.3 Unit A680: *Information and Ideas*

This examined unit consists of two sections:

2.4.1 Section A: Non-fiction and media

The tasks will be based on the reading of previously unseen authentic materials. Candidates will be provided two pieces of stimulus material, **one** non-fiction and **one** media-based. Differentiated materials will be set at Foundation and Higher Tier. Candidates answer **all** questions.

The tasks will require candidates to:

- show understanding of how meaning is constructed through words, sentences and whole texts, recognising the effects of language choices and patterns and of presentation

- evaluate the ways in which texts may be interpreted differently according to the perspective of the reader.

2.4.2 Section B: Writing

Candidates are required to produce **one** piece of continuous writing. There will be a choice of two tasks, **one** of which will be on a topic broadly linked to the reading material provided in Section A.

Candidates will be encouraged to develop their own ideas. They may draw on the reading materials in Section A if they wish; however, the task will not require specific reference to the reading materials.

Candidates should be able to write accurately and fluently:

- choosing content and adapting style and language to a range of forms, media, contexts, audiences and purposes

- adapting form to a range of styles and genres.

2.4 Unit A640: *Speaking and listening*

This is a controlled assessment unit. It does not contribute to the GCSE grade, but entry is mandatory for GCSE certification.

The focus of this unit is to develop candidates' speaking and listening skills.

During the course, candidates should engage in speaking and listening activities in a variety of formal and informal contexts. One activity must allow candidates to participate in a real-life context in and beyond the classroom.

Candidates are required to submit work in **three** assessment contexts:

- individual extended contribution

- group activity

- drama-focused activity.

OCR will allow centres to design their own tasks. OCR will also set exemplar tasks which can be adapted by the centre.

Tasks set will provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their ability to fulfil the assessment objective for Speaking and Listening – AO1.

Candidates should be able to:

- present and listen to information and ideas

- respond appropriately to the questions and views of others

- make a range of effective contributions, using creative approaches to exploring questions, solving problems and developing ideas

- reflect and comment critically on their own and others' uses of language

- participate in a range of real-life contexts in and beyond the classroom, adapting talk appropriately to situation and audience and using Standard English where appropriate

- select and use a range of dramatic techniques and creative approaches to explore ideas, texts and issues in scripted and improvised work.

3   Assessment of GCSE English

3.1   Overview of the assessment in GCSE English – J350

For GCSE English, candidates must take **all four** units.

Unit A641:	*Reading literary texts*
20% of the qualification About 50 hours 40 marks (AO2: 20%)	Controlled assessment: internally assessed and externally moderated. Candidates respond to **three** tasks from a range of tasks provided by OCR. Candidates respond to **one** task on a play by Shakespeare, **one** on prose or literary non-fiction and **one** on poetry. **The latter two tasks must include study of both a text from the English, Welsh or Irish literary heritage, and a text from a different culture or tradition.**
Unit A642:	*Imaginative writing*
20% of the qualification About 20 hours 40 marks (AO3: 20%)	Controlled assessment: internally assessed and externally moderated. Two continuous linked writing responses from a choice of Media or Text Development. Candidates respond to **one** core task and **one** linked task from a choice of three tasks provided by OCR.
Unit A680:	*Information and ideas*
60% of the qualification 2 hour Written paper: Foundation and Higher Tier 80 marks: Section A: 40 marks (AO2: 30%) Section B: 40 marks (AO3: 30%)	Examination: externally assessed. **Section A : Non-fiction and media** Candidates answer **all** the questions. Responses to unseen authentic passages. **Section B: Writing** Candidates choose **one** task from a choice of two tasks. One continuous writing response.
Unit A640:	*Speaking and listening*
This unit does not contribute to the GCSE grade, but entry is mandatory for GCSE certification. About 20 hours 40 marks (AO1)	Controlled assessment: internally assessed and externally moderated. Candidates choose **three** tasks from tasks designed by the centre according to defined parameters set by OCR. Three assessment contexts: individual extended contribution, group activity and drama-focused activity. One activity must be a real-life context in and beyond the classroom.

3.2 Tiers

For controlled assessment units A640, A641 and A642, the assessment is untiered.

For examined unit A680, the assessment is tiered. Foundation tier targets grades G to C and Higher tier targets grades D to A*. An allowed grade E will be awarded on the Higher tier component.

3.3 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

Candidates are expected to demonstrate the following in the context of the content described:

AO1	**Speaking and listening** • Speak to communicate clearly and purposefully; structure and sustain talk, adapting it to different situations and audiences; use Standard English and a variety of techniques as appropriate. • Listen and respond to speakers' ideas and perspectives, and how they construct and express meanings. • Interact with others, shaping meanings through suggestions, comments and questions and drawing ideas together. • Create and sustain different roles.
AO2	**Reading** • Read and understand texts, selecting material appropriate to purpose, collating from different sources and making comparisons and cross-references as appropriate. • Develop and sustain interpretations of writers' ideas and perspectives. • Explain and evaluate how writers use linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational features to achieve effects and engage and influence the reader. • Understand texts in their social, cultural and historical contexts.
AO3	**Writing** • Write to communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, using and adapting forms and selecting vocabulary appropriate to task and purpose in ways that engage the reader. • Organise information and ideas into structured and sequenced sentences, paragraphs and whole texts, using a variety of linguistic and structural features to support cohesion and overall coherence. • Use a range of sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate punctuation and spelling. (At least one third of available credit for AO3 should be awarded to the use of a range of sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate punctuation and spelling.)

3.3.1 AO weightings – GCSE English

The relationship between the units and the assessment objectives of the scheme of assessment is shown in the following grid:

Unit	% of GCSE			Total
	AO1	AO2	AO3	
Unit A641: *Reading literary texts*	-	20	-	**20%**
Unit A642: *Imaginative writing*	-	-	20	**20%**
Unit A680: *Information and ideas*	-	30	30	**60%**
Unit A640: *Speaking and listening*	0	-	-	**0%**
Total	**0%**	**50%**	**50%**	**100%**

AO1 is assessed in unit A640 Speaking and listening which although required for GCSE English, does not contribute to the overall result calculation, and is therefore 0% of the GCSE.

3.4 Grading and awarding grades

GCSE results are awarded on the scale A* to G. Grades are indicated on certificates. However, results for candidates who fail to achieve the minimum grade (G) will be recorded as unclassified (U) and this is not certificated.

Units A641, A642 and A680 are awarded a* to g. Results for candidates who fail to achieve the minimum grade (G) will be recorded as unclassified (U) and this is not certificated.

For the non-contributory but mandatory unit A640: Speaking and listening, grades will range from 5 (the highest) to 1 (the lowest), and be displayed on a separate line on the candidate's GCSE certificate.

Most GCSEs are unitised schemes. When working out candidates' overall grades, OCR needs to be able to compare performance on the same unit in different series when different grade boundaries have been set, and between different units. OCR uses a Uniform Mark Scale to enable this to be done.

A candidate's uniform mark for each unit is calculated from the candidate's raw mark on that unit. The raw mark boundary marks are converted to the equivalent uniform mark boundary. Marks between grade boundaries are converted on a pro rata basis.

When unit results are issued, the candidate's unit grade and uniform mark are given. The uniform mark is shown out of the maximum uniform mark for the unit, e.g. 40/50.

The specification is graded on a Uniform Mark Scale. The uniform mark thresholds for each of the assessments are shown below:

GCSE Unit	Unit Weighting	Maximum unit uniform mark	Unit Grade								
			a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	u
A641/A642	20%	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12	0
A680 Higher	60%	180	162	144	126	108	90	81	-	-	0
A680 Foundation	60%	125	-	-	-	108	90	72	54	36	0

Higher tier candidates who fail to gain a 'd' grade in the examined unit may achieve an "allowed e". Higher tier candidates who miss the allowed grade 'e' will be graded as 'u'.

Unit A640 has a unit weighting of 0% as the result does not contribute to the overall GCSE calculation and so has a maximum unit uniform mark of 0.

A candidate's uniform marks for each unit are aggregated and grades for the specification are generated on the following scale:

Qualification	Maximum uniform mark	Qualification Grade								
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
GCSE	300	270	240	210	180	150	120	90	60	0

The written papers will have a total weighting of 60% and controlled assessment a weighting of 40%.

A candidate's uniform mark for each paper will be combined with the uniform mark for the controlled assessment to give a total uniform mark for the specification. The candidate's grade will be determined by the total uniform mark.

3.5 Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the assessment may be balanced by better performance in others.

The grade descriptors have been produced by the regulatory authorities in collaboration with the awarding bodies.

Grade F

Candidates talk confidently in familiar situations, showing some awareness of purpose and of listeners' needs. They convey information, develop ideas and describe feelings clearly, using the main features of Standard English as appropriate. They listen with concentration and make relevant responses to others' ideas and opinions. They show some awareness of how they and others use and adapt spoken language for specific purposes. In formal and creative activities, they attempt to meet the demands of different roles.

Candidates describe the main ideas, themes or argument in a range of texts and refer to specific aspects or details when justifying their views. They make simple comparisons and cross-references that show some awareness of how texts achieve their effects through writers' use of linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational devices. They are aware that some features of texts relate to their specific social, cultural and historical contexts.

Candidates' writing shows some adaptation of form and style for different tasks and purposes. It communicates simply and clearly with the reader. Sentences sequence events or ideas logically; vocabulary is sometimes chosen for variety and interest. Paragraphing is straightforward but effective; the structure of sentences, including some that are complex, is usually correct. Spelling and basic punctuation are mostly accurate.

Grade C

Candidates adapt their talk to the demands of different situations and contexts. They recognise when Standard English is required and use it confidently. They use different sentence structures and select vocabulary so that information, ideas and feelings are communicated clearly and the listener's interest is engaged. They explain and evaluate how they and others use and adapt spoken language for specific purposes. Through careful listening and by developing their own and others' ideas, they make significant contributions to discussion and participate effectively in creative activities.

Candidates understand and demonstrate how meaning and information are conveyed in a range of texts. They make personal and critical responses, referring to specific aspects of language, grammar, structure and presentational devices to justify their views. They successfully compare and cross-reference aspects of texts and explain convincingly how they may vary in purpose and how they achieve different effects. They comment on how social, cultural and historical contexts affect readers' responses to texts.

Candidates' writing shows successful adaptation of form and style to different tasks and for various purposes. They use a range of sentence structures and varied vocabulary to create different effects and engage the reader's interest. Paragraphing is used effectively to make the sequence of events or development of ideas coherent and clear to the reader. Sentence structures are varied; punctuation and spelling are accurate and sometimes bold.

Grade A

Candidates select suitable styles and registers of spoken English for a range of situations and contexts, showing assured use of Standard English where appropriate. They confidently vary sentence structures and choose from a broad repertoire of vocabulary to express information, ideas and feelings in an engaging manner. They initiate conversations and demonstrate sensitive listening through contributions that sustain and develop discussion. They recognise and fulfil the demands of different roles, whether in formal settings or creative activities.

Candidates respond personally and persuasively to a variety of texts, developing interpretations and evaluating how details of language, grammar, structure and presentation engage and affect the reader. They identify and discuss writers' perspectives in narrative, argument, explanation or analysis. They choose apt quotations and make telling comparisons and cross-references that illuminate the purpose and meanings of texts, explaining the impact of their social, cultural and historical contexts where appropriate.

Candidates' writing shows confident, assured control of a range of forms and styles appropriate to task and purpose. Texts engage and hold the reader's interest through logical argument, persuasive force or creative delight. Linguistic and structural features are used skilfully to sequence texts and achieve coherence. A wide range of accurate sentence structures ensures clarity; choices of vocabulary, punctuation and spelling are ambitious, imaginative and correct.

3.5.1 Grade descriptions for Unit A640: *Speaking and Listening*

Grade 1

Candidates talk confidently in familiar situations, showing some awareness of purpose and of listeners' needs. They convey information, develop ideas and describe feelings clearly, using the main features of Standard English as appropriate. They listen with concentration and make relevant responses to others' ideas and opinions. They show some awareness of how they and others use and adapt spoken language for specific purposes. In formal and creative activities, they attempt to meet the demands of different roles.

Grade 3

Candidates adapt their talk to the demands of different situations and contexts. They recognise when Standard English is required and use it confidently. They use different sentence structures and select vocabulary so that information, ideas and feelings are communicated clearly and the listener's interest is engaged. They explain and evaluate how they and others use and adapt spoken language for specific purposes. Through careful listening and by developing their own and others' ideas, they make significant contributions to discussion and participate effectively in creative activities.

Grade 5

Candidates select suitable styles and registers of spoken English for a range of situations and contexts, showing assured use of Standard English where appropriate. They confidently vary sentence structures and choose from a broad repertoire of vocabulary to express information,

ideas and feelings in an engaging manner. They initiate conversations and demonstrate sensitive listening through contributions that sustain and develop discussion. They recognise and fulfil the demands of different roles, whether in formal settings or creative activities.

3.6   Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is assessed in Units A642 and A680. Tasks in these units require answers in continuous prose and therefore include the assessment of written communication. The writing tasks in each of these units include the assessment of written communication, which is assessed via the marking criteria for writing.

Candidates are expected to:

- present relevant information in a form that suits its purpose

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate, so that meaning is clear

- use an appropriate style of writing and, where applicable, specialist terminology.

4   Controlled assessment in GCSE English

This section provides general guidance on controlled assessment: what controlled assessment tasks are, when and how they are available; how to plan and manage controlled assessment and what controls must be applied throughout the process. Detailed guidance relating to controlled assessment is given in the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting controlled assessments*. More specific guidance and support is provided in the *Guide to controlled assessment in GCSE English* available on the OCR website.

4.1   Controlled assessment tasks

Controlled assessment tasks will be available from OCR Interchange and will be replaced or reviewed as detailed below. Guidance on how to access controlled assessment tasks from Interchange is available on the OCR website.

Centres must ensure that candidates undertake a task applicable to the correct year by checking carefully the dates of the tasks on Interchange.

All tasks can be contextualised by the centre.

4.1.1   Unit A641 *Reading literary texts*

Tasks set by OCR are replaced each year.

Candidates are required to study and respond to **three** tasks from a choice of tasks and texts.

Candidates respond to **one** task on a play by Shakespeare and two others: **one** on prose or literary non-fiction and **one** on poetry. The latter two tasks must include study of both a text from the English, Welsh or Irish literary heritage, and a text from a different culture or tradition (see 1.2.2). Candidates must show an understanding of texts in their social, cultural and historical contexts.

4.1.2   Unit A642 *Imaginative writing*

Tasks set by OCR are replaced each year.

Two continuous linked writing responses from a choice of Media or Text Development.

Candidates respond to **one** core task and **one** linked task from a choice of three tasks provided by OCR.

4.1.3 Unit A640 *Speaking and listening*

OCR will allow centres to design their own tasks according to defined parameters set by OCR. Candidates are required to submit work in **three** assessment contexts. All centres will receive a visit from an external moderator about once every three years.

4.2 Planning and managing controlled assessment

Controlled assessment is designed to be an integral part of teaching and learning.

For unit A641: *Reading Literary Texts,* teachers are expected to cover the study of three whole texts as described in Section 2.1 page 7.

For units A642: *Imaginative Writing* and unit A640 *Speaking and Listening*, activities which develop skills take place regularly in the classroom, using a variety of appropriate resources (as chosen by the teacher). These opportunities allow candidates to practise a wide range of tasks, and teachers can discuss and comment on performance as appropriate. There are no restrictions regarding time or feedback to individual learners during this phase.

When all necessary teaching and learning has taken place and teachers feel that candidates are ready for assessment, candidates can undertake the appropriate controlled assessment task.

Controlled assessment tasks are available at an early stage to allow planning time. Candidates should be allowed sufficient time to complete the tasks.

Suggested steps and timings are included below with guidance on regulatory controls at each step of the process. Teachers must ensure that control requirements indicated below are met throughout the process.

4.2.1 Preparation and research time

- Introduction to the task (teacher led) **1 to 1.5 hours**

Includes choice of tasks, possible approaches and sources of evidence, time allocations, programmes of work and deadlines, methods of working, control requirements.

- Preparation/research/collection of evidence

Unit	Preparation and research time
A641	About 40 hours
A642	About 20 hours
A640	About 15 hours

In the preparation/research/collection of evidence stage, a low level of control is required, which means that candidates can undertake this part of the process without direct teacher supervision

and outside the centre as required. Candidates are also able to work in collaboration during this stage. However, when producing their final piece of work, candidates must complete and/or evidence all work individually.

During the research phase candidates can be given support and guidance. Teachers can explain the task, advise on how the task could be approached, advise on resources and alert the candidate to key things that must be included in their final piece of work.

Research material can include fieldwork, internet- or paper-based research, questionnaires, audio and video files. Candidates must be guided on the use of information from other sources to ensure that confidentiality and intellectual property rights are maintained at all times. It is essential that any material directly used from a source is appropriately and rigorously referenced.

4.2.2   Producing the final piece of work

Unit	Production time	Final piece	Recommended word length
A641	Up to 6 hours	Three responses to a range of text types	Up to 3000 words
A642	Up to 4 hours	Two linked writing activities	Up to 1200 words
A640	Between 15 minutes and 1 hour	Three assessment contexts	N/A

During the production of the final piece of work, candidates are not allowed access to dictionaries or thesauri or to grammar and spell check programs. For A641, candidates can use clean copies of texts.

The final piece of work is produced in the centre under controlled conditions, which means under direct teacher supervision: teachers must be able to authenticate the work and there must be acknowledgement and referencing of any sources used. If the final piece is carried out over several sessions, work must be collected in-between sessions.

When supervising tasks, teachers are expected to:

- exercise continuing supervision of work in order to monitor progress and to prevent plagiarism

- ensure that the work is completed in accordance with the specification requirements and can be assessed in accordance with the specified marking criteria and procedures.

Teachers must not provide templates, model answers or feedback on drafts. Candidates must work independently to produce their own final piece of work.

4.2.3   Presentation of the final piece of work

Candidates must observe the following procedures when producing their final piece of work for the controlled assessment tasks:

- tables, graphs and spreadsheets may be produced using appropriate ICT. These should be inserted into the document at the appropriate place

- any copied material must be suitably acknowledged

- quotations must be clearly marked and a reference provided wherever possible

- work submitted for moderation or marking must be marked with the:

    – centre number
    – centre name
    – candidate number
    – candidate name
    – unit code and title
    – assignment title.

Work submitted on paper for moderation or marking must be secured by treasury tags. Work submitted in digital format (CD or online) must be in a suitable file structure as detailed in the Appendix.

4.3   Marking and moderating controlled assessment

All controlled assessed units are marked by the centre assessor(s) using OCR marking criteria and guidance and are moderated by the OCR-appointed moderator. External moderation is either postal moderation or e-moderation where evidence in a digital format is supplied.

4.3.1   Applying the marking criteria

The starting point for marking the tasks is the marking criteria (available on page 25–36). These contain levels of criteria for the skills, knowledge and understanding that the candidate is required to demonstrate. Before the start of the course, and for use at INSET training events, OCR will provide exemplification through real or simulated candidate work which will help to clarify the level of achievement the assessors should be looking for when awarding marks.

4.3.2   Use of 'best fit' approach to marking criteria

The assessment task(s) for each unit should be marked by teachers according to the given marking criteria within the relevant unit using a 'best fit' approach. For each of the assessment

criteria, teachers select one of the band descriptors provided in the marking grid that most closely describes the quality of the work being marked.

Marking should be positive, rewarding achievement rather than penalising failure or omissions. The award of marks **must be** directly related to the marking criteria.

Teachers use their professional judgement in selecting the band descriptor that best describes the work of the candidate.

To select the most appropriate mark within the band descriptor, teachers should use the following guidance:

- where the candidate's work *convincingly* meets the statement, the highest mark should be awarded;

- where the candidate's work *adequately* meets the statement, the most appropriate mark in the middle range should be awarded;

- where the candidate's work *just* meets the statement, the lowest mark should be awarded.

Teachers should use the full range of marks available to them and award full marks in any band for work which fully meets that descriptor. This is work which is 'the best one could expect from candidates working at that level'. Where there are only two marks within a band the choice will be between work which, in most respects, meets the statement and work which just meets the statement. For wider mark bands the marks on either side of the middle mark(s) for 'adequately met' should be used where the standard is lower or higher than 'adequate' but **not** the highest or lowest mark in the band.

For each of the controlled assessment units, the overall mark is **40**. The overall mark is generated by marking each task out of 40 and averaging the marks for the unit.

There should be clear evidence that work has been attempted and some work produced. If a candidate submits no work for an internally assessed unit, then the candidate should be indicated as being absent from that unit. If a candidate completes any work at all for an internally assessed unit, then the work should be assessed according to the unit marking criteria and the appropriate mark awarded, which may be zero.

4.3.3 A641 Reading literary texts marking criteria

Candidates submit three tasks for assessment. Each task is marked out of 40, using the marking criteria below, giving a total of 120 marks. Divide the total by 3 to provide the overall mark out of 40 for this section.

Band	Marks	Descriptors AO2
1	40 39 38 37 36	• A cogent and explicitly relevant response. • Explores and evaluates a range of interpretations of language and structure as appropriate. • Analyses in detail the writer's perspective. • Precise quotations/comparisons enhance analysis of writer's intentions • Understanding of social, cultural and historical context woven into presentation of ideas.
2	35 34 33 32 31	• A personal and persuasive response. • Develops interpretations and evaluates language and structure as appropriate. • Identifies and discusses writer's perspective. • Apt quotations/comparisons are used to illuminate meaning. • Impact of social, cultural, historical context clearly demonstrated.
3	30 29 28 27 26	• A personal, well developed and critical response. • A clear understanding of how meaning is conveyed, evaluating language and structure as appropriate. • Well selected quotations/comparisons enhance analysis. • Significance of social, cultural, historical context clearly demonstrated..
4	25 24 23 22 21	• A personal and critical response. • Understands and demonstrates how meaning is conveyed. • Quotations/comparisons used to justify views. • Comments on how social, cultural historical context affects the reader.
5	20 19 18 17 16	• Begins to develop a personal and relevant response. • Understands some of the ways meaning is conveyed. • Uses quotations/simple comparisons to support views. • Comments on the social, cultural, historical features of the text.
6	15 14 13 12 11	Makes some comments relevant to task. • Some attempt to show how meaning is conveyed. • Quotations/comparisons used to make simple points. • Aware that the text features relate to social, cultural, historical context.
7	10 9 8 7 6	• Describes some of the main features of a text in attempting to address task. • Some awareness of how the writer achieves effects through simple comparison/quotations. • Some awareness that text features relate to social, cultural, historical context.
8	5 4 3 2 1	• Some comments on text with very little or no relevance to task. • Struggles to develop a response. • Very little or no understanding of social, cultural, historical context.

0 marks = no response or no response worthy of credit.

4.3.4 A642 Imaginative writing marking criteria

Candidates submit **one** task containing **two** parts for assessment. Each part is marked out of **40** marks (out of 26 marks for AO3i & AO3ii **and** out of 14 marks for AO3iii) using the marking criteria below, giving a total of **80** marks. Divide the total by 2 to provide the overall mark out of **40** for this section.

Band	Marks	Descriptors AO3i & AO3ii	Marks	Descriptors AO3iii
1	**26** **25** **24**	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • shows sophisticated control of the material and makes effective use of linguistic devices • demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the task, addressing it with complete relevance and adapting form and style with flair to suit audience and purpose • uses precise vocabulary which is fully suited to the purpose of the writing, conveying subtlety of thought and shades of meaning, and where appropriate is imaginative and ambitious in scope • uses structure to produce deliberate effects, developing the writing coherently and skilfully from a confident opening which engages the reader to a very convincing and deliberate ending • is organised into coherent paragraphs which are clearly varied for effect and used confidently to enhance the ideas and meaning.	**14**	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • uses a wide range of sentence structures to ensure clarity and to achieve specific effects relevant to the task • uses ambitious vocabulary with very few spelling errors • uses punctuation consciously and securely to shape meaning, with very few errors.

Band	Marks	Descriptors AO3i & AO3ii	Marks	Descriptors AO3iii
2	23 22 21	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • shows full control of the material and makes some effective use of linguistic devices • demonstrates a confident understanding of the task, addressing it with consistent relevance and adapting form and style with assurance to suit audience and purpose • uses imaginative vocabulary which is appropriate to the purpose of the writing, conveying some subtlety of thought and shades of meaning, and where appropriate may show some ambition in scope • uses structure consciously for effect, developing the writing coherently from an opening which engages the reader to a convincing and deliberate ending • is organised into paragraphs which have unity, are varied for effect and are used to control the content and achieve overall coherence.	13 12	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • uses a range of sentence structures to ensure clarity and to achieve specific effects relevant to the task • uses more complex and irregular vocabulary, almost always securely spelled • uses punctuation to shape meaning, mainly securely, with errors only in more complex, irregular structures.

Band	Marks	Descriptors AO3i & AO3ii	Marks	Descriptors AO3iii
3	**20** **19** **18**	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • shows generally competent control of the material but may not always convey meaning clearly when using more ambitious linguistic devices and structures • demonstrates a secure understanding of the task, addressing it in a relevant way and adapting form and style with confidence to suit audience and purpose • uses varied vocabulary to create different effects which are mainly appropriate to the purpose of the writing, conveying thought and meaning clearly • uses structure deliberately and with direction – a focused and interesting opening, events and ideas developed clearly and in some detail, an appropriate ending • uses paragraphs of varying length and structure for effect, which effectively organise and link ideas and create an overall sense of coherence.	**11** **10**	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • uses generally well controlled sentence structures which are varied in length and type and show evidence of being used deliberately to create specific effects appropriate to the task • shows secure spelling of complex regular words and generally secure spelling of irregular or more complex vocabulary • uses punctuation to enhance or clarify meaning – is accurate both within and between sentences, but may make some errors in complex sentence structures.

Band	Marks	Descriptors AO3i & AO3ii	Marks	Descriptors AO3iii
4	**17** **16** **15**	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • shows general control of the material; the response may be straightforward and controlled but linguistically unambitious or may lose some control in attempting something ambitious • demonstrates an understanding of the task, addressing it in a mainly relevant way with some evidence of adapting form and style to suit different audiences and purposes • uses some variety of vocabulary to create different effects and to suit the purpose of the writing, but which may be imprecise or fail to convey shades of meaning • uses structure with a sense of direction – a clear and focused opening, straightforward development of ideas, an attempt to achieve an appropriate ending • is organised into paragraphs which may be varied for effect and which are carefully linked together to make the sequence of events or development of ideas clear to the reader.	**9** **8**	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • uses sentence structures which show some variety. May tend to repeat sentence types, lose control of more ambitious structures, or make some syntactical errors • usually spells complex regular words securely; may make errors with irregular or more complex vocabulary • uses punctuation in an attempt to create some specific effects; is usually accurate for sentence separation and sometimes within sentences, but may make less secure use of speech marks, colons and semi colons.

Band	Marks	Descriptors AO3i & AO3ii	Marks	Descriptors AO3iii
5	**14** **13** **12**	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • may not always show control of the material; the response may be simple and controlled but linguistically unambitious, or may attempt something ambitious but tend to lose control • demonstrates some understanding of the task, addressing it in a sometimes relevant way and with some attempt to adapt form and style to suit audience and purpose • uses vocabulary to create some limited effects, which may however be too simple to convey shades of meaning, not fully understood or not appropriate and may contain some idiomatic errors • uses structure with some sense of direction – a generally clear and focused opening, some development of ideas, a limited attempt to achieve an appropriate ending • uses paragraphs which may occasionally be varied for effect and/or are linked together to make the sequence of events or development of ideas fairly clear to the reader.	**7** **6**	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • uses sentence structures which show a little variety; may tend to repeat sentence types, lose control of more ambitious structures, and/or include syntactical errors • usually spells simple regular vocabulary securely but may make errors with complex regular vocabulary • uses punctuation which sometimes helps clarify meaning, usually accurately for sentence separation and sometimes successfully within sentences.

Band	Marks	Descriptors AO3i & AO3ii	Marks	Descriptors AO3iii
6	11 10 9	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • does not always show control of the material; the response may have a level of linguistic error that distracts the reader from the merits of the content • demonstrates a limited understanding of the task and addresses it with some relevance, making a limited attempt to adapt form and style to suit audience and purpose • uses vocabulary which is sometimes chosen for variety and interest but likely to be limited in range, sometimes inappropriate and may contain some idiomatic errors • structures writing with some sense of direction which may not be sustained; a fairly clear opening, some limited development of ideas, some sense of an ending • uses paragraphs which create some sense of sequence for the events or the development of ideas but which may lack unity or have little or no evidence of links between them.	5 4	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • uses repetitive sentence structures, which are mainly simple or compound, or lengthy with some sense of control • usually spells simple regular vocabulary accurately but may make a number of typical errors • sometimes uses punctuation accurately for sentence separation but has limited success with attempts to use it within sentences to clarify meaning.

Band	Marks	Descriptors AO3i & AO3ii	Marks	Descriptors AO3iii
7	8 7 6	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • shows limited control of the material; the level of linguistic error may require the reader to re-read some sentences before the meaning is clear • demonstrates a very limited understanding of the task, addressing it with occasional focus and making limited attempts to adapt form and style to suit audience and purpose • uses vocabulary to create occasional variety and interest but which is likely to be very limited in range and often inappropriate with some idiomatic errors • shows some signs of organisation and some sense of direction – a limited attempt to create an opening, very simple or rambling development of ideas, may come to a stop rather than achieving a deliberate ending • uses paragraphs which may signal only obvious development of events or ideas, or which may be haphazard and lack clear links or overall unity.	3 2	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • uses simple repetitive sentence structures with little control of more complex ones and frequent syntactical faults • spells some simple regular vocabulary accurately but makes random errors • uses some basic punctuation with some success between sentences but, within sentences, usually misuses or omits it.

Band	Marks	Descriptors AO3i & AO3ii	Marks	Descriptors AO3iii
8	5 4 3	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • offers occasional relevant and comprehensible content, but density of linguistic error may require the reader to re-read and re-organise the text before meaning is clear • demonstrates a little awareness of the task, addressing it with intermittent focus; form and style may occasionally be appropriate to audience and/or purpose, but this is unlikely to be deliberate • uses vocabulary which is very occasionally chosen for variety and/or interest but which is very limited in range and often inappropriate, with obvious idiomatic errors • shows occasional signs of organisation and a very limited – if any – sense of direction • uses paragraphs occasionally to signal very obvious changes in the direction of events or ideas, but which may need to be re-read or re-organised before the meaning is clear.	2	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • uses recognisable sentence structures, with some accuracy in the use of more simple ones • uses erratic spelling which may be recognisable for most words but is accurate for only a limited number • uses punctuation which is occasionally successful but is inconsistent and likely to be inaccurate.
Below band 8	2 1	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • is very short or communicates very little, with some sections making no sense at all; may gain some marks where there is occasional clarity • shows almost no awareness of task, audience or purpose • uses vocabulary which is seriously limited • shows almost no signs of organisation or sense of direction • uses paragraphs – if at all – in a haphazard way such that, in spite of re-reading and re-organising, very little sense emerges.	1	*In this band a candidate's writing:* • uses spelling and punctuation so imprecisely that very little meaning is communicated.

0 marks = no response or no response worthy of credit.

4.3.5 A640 Speaking and listening marking criteria

Candidates submit **three** tasks for assessment. Each task is marked out of **40** marks using the marking criteria below, giving a total out of 120 marks. Divide the total mark by 3 to provide the overall mark out of 40 for this section.

Band/Marks	**Communicating and adapting language** (individual extended contribution)	**Interacting and responding** (Group activity)	**Creating and sustaining roles** (Drama-focused activity)
Band 5 **32–40**	Candidates: • highlight priorities and essential detail when communicating complex and demanding subject matter • use a sophisticated repertoire of strategies to meet challenging contexts and purposes • show an assured choice and flexible use of Standard English vocabulary and grammar in appropriate situations.	Candidates: • sustain concentrated listening, showing understanding of complex ideas through interrogating what is said • shape direction and content of talk, responding with flexibility to develop ideas and challenge assumptions • initiate, develop and sustain discussion through encouraging participation and interaction, resolving differences and achieving positive outcomes.	Candidates: • create complex characters and fulfil the demands of challenging roles through insightful choice of dramatic approaches • explore and respond to complex ideas issues and relationships in varied formal and informal scenarios.

Band/Marks	Communicating and adapting language (individual extended contribution)	Interacting and responding (Group activity)	Creating and sustaining roles (Drama-focused activity)
Band 4 **24–31**	Candidates: • confidently convey and interpret information, ideas and feelings, emphasising significant points and issues • adapt and shape talk and non-verbal features to meet the demands of different situations, contexts and purposes • make appropriate, controlled, effective use of Standard English vocabulary and grammar.	Candidates: • challenge, develop and respond to what they hear in thoughtful and considerate ways, seeking clarification through apt questions • analyse and reflect on others' ideas to clarify issues and assumptions and develop the discussion • identify useful outcomes and help structure discussion through purposeful contributions.	Candidates: • create convincing characters and roles using a range of carefully selected verbal and non-verbal techniques • respond skilfully and sensitively in different situations and scenarios, to explore ideas and issues and relationships.
Band 3 **16–23**	Candidates: • effectively communicate information, ideas and feelings, promote issues and points of view • adapt talk to a variety of situations and audiences, using non-verbal features to add to impact • use a range of well-judged vocabulary and sentence structures to achieve different purposes, including competent and appropriate use of Standard English.	Candidates: • listen closely and attentively, engaging with what is heard through perceptive responses • make significant contributions that move discussions forward • engage with others' ideas and feelings, recognising obvious bias or prejudice and referring to precise detail.	Candidates: • develop and sustain roles and characters through appropriate language and effective gesture and movement • make contributions to the development of situations and ideas, showing understanding and insight into relationships and significant issues.

Band/Marks	Communicating and adapting language (individual extended contribution)	Interacting and responding (Group activity)	Creating and sustaining roles (Drama-focused activity)
Band 2 **8–15**	Candidates: • convey straightforward information and ideas, coherent accounts and narratives in extended turns • begin to adapt talk and non-verbal features to meet the needs of different audiences • use a variety of vocabulary and structures for different purposes, including appropriate features of Standard English with reasonable accuracy.	Candidates: • respond positively to what they hear, including helpful requests for explanation and further detail • make specific, relevant contributions to discussion • allow others to express ideas or points of view that may differ from their own and respond appropriately.	Candidates: • show understanding of characters by creating straightforward roles using speech, gesture and movement • engage with situations and ideas, showing understanding of issues and relationships.
Band 1 **1–7**	Candidates: • briefly express points of view, ideas and feelings • sometimes develop detail to add interest to accounts, narratives and information, supported by appropriate non-verbal features • use straightforward vocabulary and grammar, showing awareness of some main features of Standard English.	Candidates: • respond to what they hear, showing some interest, including non-verbal reactions • make brief, occasional contributions and general statements in discussion • follow central ideas and possibilities in what they hear and raise straightforward questions.	Candidates: • draw on obvious and sometimes stereotypical ideas to create simple characters • react to situations in predictable but appropriate ways, demonstrating some understanding of relationships and familiar ideas.

0 marks = no response or no response worthy of credit

4.3.6   Authentication of work

Teachers must be confident that the work they mark is the candidate's own. This does not mean that a candidate must be supervised throughout the completion of all work but the teacher must exercise sufficient supervision, or introduce sufficient checks, to be in a position to judge the authenticity of the candidate's work.

Candidates must not plagiarise. Plagiarism is the submission of another's work as one's own and/or failure to acknowledge the source correctly. Plagiarism is considered to be malpractice and could lead to the candidate being disqualified. Plagiarism sometimes occurs innocently when candidates are unaware of the need to reference or acknowledge their sources. It is therefore important that centres ensure that candidates understand that the work they submit must be their own and that they understand the meaning of plagiarism and what penalties may be applied. Candidates may refer to research, quotations or evidence but they must list their sources. The rewards from acknowledging sources, and the credit they will gain from doing so, should be emphasised to candidates as well as the potential risks of failing to acknowledge such material. Candidates may be asked to sign a declaration to this effect. Centres should reinforce this message to ensure candidates understand what is expected of them.

Please note: Centres must confirm to OCR that the evidence produced by candidates is authentic. The Centre Authentication Form includes a declaration for teachers to sign and is available from the OCR website and OCR Interchange.

4.3.7   Internal standardisation

It is important that all internal assessors, working in the same subject area, work to common standards. Centres must ensure that the internal standardisation of marks across assessors and teaching groups takes place using an appropriate procedure.

This can be done in a number of ways. In the first year, reference material and OCR training meetings will provide a basis for centres' own standardisation. In subsequent years, this, or centres' own archive material, may be used. Centres are advised to hold preliminary meetings of staff involved to compare standards through cross-marking a small sample of work. After most marking has been completed, a further meeting at which work is exchanged and discussed will enable final adjustments to be made.

4.3.8   Moderation

All work for controlled assessment is marked by the teacher and internally standardised by the centre. Marks are then submitted to OCR, after which moderation takes place in accordance with OCR procedures: refer to the OCR website for submission dates of the marks to OCR. The purpose of moderation is to ensure that the standard of the award of marks for work is the same for each centre and that each teacher has applied the standards appropriately across the range of candidates within the centre.

The sample of work which is presented to the moderator for moderation must show how the marks have been awarded in relation to the marking criteria defined in the sample controlled assessment material (SAM).

Each candidate's work should have a cover sheet attached to it with a summary of the marks awarded for the task. If the work is to be submitted in digital format, this cover sheet should also be submitted electronically within each candidate's files.

4.4   Submitting the moderation samples via the OCR Repository

The OCR Repository is a secure website for centres to upload candidate work and for assessors to access this work digitally. Centres can use the OCR Repository for uploading marked candidate work for moderation.

Centres can access the OCR Repository via OCR Interchange, find their candidate entries in their area of the Repository, and use the Repository to upload files (singly or in bulk) for access by their moderator.

The OCR Repository allows candidates to send evidence in electronic file types that would normally be difficult to submit through postal moderation, for example multimedia and other interactive unit submissions.

The OCR GCSE English units A641, A642 and A640 can be submitted electronically to the OCR Repository via Interchange: please check Section 7.4 page 44 for unit entry codes for the OCR Repository.

There are three ways to load files to the OCR Repository:

1   Centres can load multiple files against multiple candidates by clicking on 'Upload candidate files' in the Candidates tab of the Candidate Overview screen.

2   Centres can load multiple files against a specific candidate by clicking on 'Upload files' in the Candidate Details screen.

3   Centres can load multiple administration files by clicking on 'Upload admin files' in the Administration tab of the Candidate Overview screen.

The OCR Repository is seen as a faster, greener and more convenient means of providing work for assessment. It is part of a wider programme bringing digital technology to the assessment process, the aim of which is to provide simpler and easier administration for centres.

Instructions for how to upload files to OCR using the OCR Repository can be found on OCR Interchange.

5 Support for GCSE English

5.1 Free resources available from the OCR website

The following materials will be available on the [GCSE English qualification page](#):

- GCSE English Specification

- specimen assessment materials for each unit

- Speaking and Listening DVD Guidance Notes

- guide to controlled assessment;

- Teachers' Handbook;

- sample schemes of work and lesson plans for each unit.

Other resources:

- a copy of OCR's Poetry Anthology, *Reflections*, for every reader

- a CD-ROM of OCR's Poetry Anthology, *Reflections*, for every centre

- DVD to accompany *Reflections* Poetry Anthology

- Speaking and Listening DVD.

5.2 Other resources

OCR offers centres a wealth of quality published support with a fantastic choice of 'Official Publisher Partner' and 'Approved Publication' resources, all endorsed by OCR for use with OCR specifications.

OCR works in close collaboration with three Publisher Partners; Hodder Education, Heinemann and Oxford University Press (OUP) to ensure centres have access to:

- better published support, available when you need it, tailored to OCR specifications

- quality resources produced in consultation with OCR subject teams, which are linked to OCR's teacher support materials

- more resources for specifications with lower candidate entries

- materials which are subject to a thorough quality assurance process to achieve endorsement.

Oxford University Press (OUP) is the publisher partner for OCR GCSE English.

OCR still endorses other publisher materials, which undergo a thorough quality assurance process to achieve endorsement. By offering a choice of endorsed materials, centres can be assured of quality support for all OCR qualifications.

5.3   Training

- OCR will offer a range of support activities for all practitioners throughout the lifetime of the qualification to ensure they have the relevant knowledge and skills to deliver the qualification.

- Please see www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk for further information.

5.4   OCR Support Services

5.4.1   Active Results

Active Results is available to all centres offering OCR's GCSE English specification.

Active Results is a free results analysis service to help teachers review the performance of individual candidates or whole schools.

Devised specifically for the UK market, data can be analysed using filters on several categories such as gender and other demographic information, as well as providing breakdowns of results by question and topic.

Active Results allows you to look in greater detail at your results:

- richer and more granular data will be made available to centres including question level data available from e-marking

- you can identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual candidates and your centre's cohort as a whole

- our systems have been developed in close consultation with teachers so that the technology delivers what you need.

Further information on Active Results can be found on the OCR website.

5.4.2   OCR Interchange

OCR Interchange has been developed to help you to carry out day to day administration functions online, quickly and easily. The site allows you to register and enter candidates online. In addition, you can gain immediate free access to candidate information at your convenience. Sign up at the [OCR website](#).

6 Access to GCSE English

6.1 Equality Act Information relating to GCSE English

GCSEs often require assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised GCSE qualifications and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments and to demonstrate what they know and can do. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to the assessment. Information on reasonable adjustments is found in *Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations* produced by the Joint Council www.jcq.org.uk.

Candidates who are unable to access part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken.

The access arrangements permissible for use in this specification are in line with Ofqual's GCSE subject criteria equalities review and are as follows:

	Yes/No	Type of assessment
Readers	Yes	AO1, AO3
	Yes	AO2 – Permitted for the prepared components of reading assessment.
	No	AO2 – Not permitted for unseen components of reading assessment where the independent scanning and decoding of texts is required.
Scribes	Yes	All assessments
Practical assistants	Yes	For written examinations only (e.g. to open and turn pages).
Word processors	Yes	All assessments
Transcripts	Yes	All assessments
Oral language modifiers	Yes	For communication of instructions and questions only.
	No	Texts/source material or literary extracts must not be modified.
BSL signers	Yes	For communication of instructions and questions only.
	No	Texts/source material or literary extracts must not be signed.
Modified question papers	Yes	All assessments
Extra time	Yes	All assessments

6.2 Arrangements for candidates with particular requirements (including Special Consideration)

All candidates with a demonstrable need may be eligible for access arrangements to enable them to show what they know and can do. The criteria for eligibility for access arrangements can be found in the JCQ document *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration*.

Candidates who have been fully prepared for the assessment but who have been affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control at the time of the examination may be eligible for special consideration. As above, centres should consult the JCQ document *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration*.

7 Administration of GCSE English

The sections below explain in more detail the rules that apply from the June 2014 examination series onwards.

7.1 Availability of assessment

There will be:

- one examination series available each year in June to **all** candidates;

- one re-take opportunity available in November each year for candidates who have already certificated in GCSE English or GCSE English Language with any awarding body. Candidates who have not previously certificated for GCSE English or GCSE English Language will not be permitted to enter for any unit or for certification in November.

	Unit A641	Unit A642	Unit A640	Unit A680	Certification availability
June 2014	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
November 2014	Re-take only	Re-take only	Re-take only	Re-take only	Re-take only
June 2015	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
November 2015	Re-take only	Re-take only	Re-take only	Re-take only	Re-take only

7.2 Certification rules

For GCSE English a 100% terminal rule applies. Candidates must enter for all their units in the series in which the qualification is certificated.

7.3 Rules for re-taking a qualification

Candidates may enter for the qualification an unlimited number of times.

Where a candidate re-takes a qualification, all units must be re-entered and **all** externally assessed units must be re-taken in the same series as the qualification is re-certificated. The new results for these units will be used to calculate the new qualification grade. Any results previously achieved cannot be re-used.

For each of the controlled assessment units, candidates who are re-taking a qualification can choose either to re-take that controlled assessment unit or to carry forward the result for that unit that was used towards the previous certification of the same qualification.

- Where a candidate decides to re-take the controlled assessment, the new result will be the one used to calculate the new qualification grade. Any results previously achieved cannot be re-used.

- Where a candidate decides to carry forward a result for controlled assessment, they must be entered for the controlled assessment unit in the re-take series using the entry code for the carry forward option (see Section 7.4).

- For the Speaking and listening unit, previous results from GCSE English (unit A643) and GCSE English Language (unit A652/03 or A652/04) can be carried forward.

For controlled assessment units which are retaken, portfolios must contain new work only. This means the task taking part of the process must be completed. All task preparation and research work and the original notes can be used again. The original response cannot be taken into the task taking session.

7.4 Making entries

7.4.1 Unit entries

Centres must be approved to offer OCR qualifications before they can make any entries, including estimated entries. It is recommended that centres apply to OCR to become an approved centre well in advance of making their first entries. Centres must have made an entry for a unit in order for OCR to supply the appropriate forms and administrative materials.

It is essential that correct unit entry codes are used when making unit entries.

For the externally assessed unit A680, candidates must be entered for either component 01 (Foundation Tier) or 02 (Higher Tier) using the appropriate unit entry code from the table below. It is not possible for a candidate to take both components for a particular unit within the same series; however, different units may be taken at different tiers.

For the controlled assessment units, centres can decide whether they want to submit candidates' work for moderation through the OCR Repository or by post. Centres must use the same submission method for all candidates for each unit, but can choose different methods for different units. Candidates submitting controlled assessment must be entered for the appropriate unit entry code from the table below. Candidates who are re-taking the qualification and who want to carry forward the controlled assessment should be entered using the unit entry code for the carry forward option.

Centres should note that controlled assessment tasks can still be completed at a time which is appropriate to the centre/candidate. However, where tasks change from year to year, centres would have to ensure that candidates had completed the correct task(s) for the year of entry.

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Unit entry code	Component code	Assessment method	Unit titles
A641A	01	Moderated via OCR Repository	*Reading literary texts*
A641B	02	Moderated via postal moderation	
A641C	80	Carried forward	
A642A	01	Moderated via OCR Repository	*Imaginative writing*
A642B	02	Moderated via postal moderation	
A642C	80	Carried forward	
A640A	01	Moderated via OCR Repository	*Speaking and listening*
A640B	02	Moderated via postal moderation	
A640C	80	Carried forward	
A680F	01	Foundation Tier Written Paper	*Information and ideas*
A680H	02	Higher Tier Written Paper	

7.4.2   Certification entries

Candidates must be entered for qualification certification separately from unit assessment(s). If a certification entry is **not** made, no overall grade can be awarded.

Centres must enter candidates for:

•   GCSE English certification code J350.

7.5   Enquiries about results

Under certain circumstances, a centre may wish to query the result issued to one or more candidates. Enquiries about results for GCSE units must be made immediately following the series in which the relevant unit was taken and by the enquiries about results deadline for that series.

Please refer to the *JCQ Post-Results Services* booklet and the *OCR Admin Guide 14–19 Qualifications* for further guidance on enquiries about results and deadlines. Copies of the latest versions of these documents can be obtained from the OCR website.

7.6   Prohibited qualifications and classification code

Every specification is assigned a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs. The classification code for this specification is 5010.

In order to meet the statutory requirement of the Key Stage 4 Programme of Study for English, pre-16 candidates must be entered for GCSE English Language **and** GCSE English Literature combined: Alternatively, candidates can be entered for GCSE English (except pre-16 in Wales).

Either GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature combined or GCSE English will be counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables as part of the 5 A*–C performance indicators, including English and mathematics.

In Wales, GCSE English is not approved pre-16. Centres can meet statutory requirements fully through entering candidates for both GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature.

Centres may wish to advise candidates that, if they take two specifications with the same classification code, colleges are very likely to take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCSEs. The same view may be taken if candidates take two GCSE specifications that have different classification codes but have significant overlap of content. Candidates who have any doubts about their subject combinations should seek advice, either from their centre or from the institution to which they wish to progress.

8 Other information about GCSE English

8.1 Overlap with other qualifications

There is significant overlap between the content of this specification and OCR's GCSE English Language specification (J355) and overlap with OCR's GCSE English Literature specification (J360). Additionally, there is significant overlap with OCR's Functional Skills for English.

8.2 Progression from this qualification

GCSE qualifications are general qualifications which enable candidates to progress either directly to employment, or to proceed to further qualifications.

Progression to further study from GCSE will depend upon the number and nature of the grades achieved. Broadly, candidates who are awarded mainly Grades D to G at GCSE could either strengthen their base through further study of qualifications at Level 1 within the National Qualifications Framework or could proceed to Level 2. Candidates who are awarded mainly Grades A* to C at GCSE would be well prepared for study at Level 3 within the National Qualifications Framework.

8.3 Avoidance of bias

OCR has taken great care in preparation of this specification and assessment materials to avoid bias of any kind. Special focus is given to the 9 strands of the Equality Act with the aim of ensuring both direct and indirect discrimination is avoided.

8.4 Regulatory requirements

This specification complies in all respects with the current: *General Conditions of Recognition; GCSE, GCE, Principal Learning and Project Code of Practice; GCSE Controlled Assessment regulations and the GCSE subject criteria for English*. All documents are available on the Ofqual website.

8.5 Language

This specification and associated assessment materials are in English only. Only answers written in English will be assessed.

8.6 Spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, economic and cultural issues

This specification offers opportunities for spoken and written activities which contribute to the development of candidates' understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, economic and cultural issues, for example through the study of a range of literary and non-literary texts.

8.7 Sustainable development, health and safety considerations and European developments, consistent with international agreements

This specification supports these issues, consistent with current EU agreements.

8.8 Key Skills

This specification provides opportunities for the development of the Key Skills of Communication, Information and Communication Technology, Working with Others, Improving Own Learning and Performance and Problem Solving at Levels 1 and/or 2. However, the extent to which this evidence fulfils the Key Skills criteria at these levels will be totally dependent on the style of teaching and learning adopted for each unit.

The following table indicates where opportunities may exist for at least some coverage of the various Key Skills criteria at Levels 1 and/or 2 for each unit.

Unit	C		AoN		ICT		WwO		IoLP		PS	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
A641/A642	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A640/A680	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Appendix A: Guidance for the production of electronic controlled assessment

Structure for evidence

A controlled assessment portfolio is a collection of folders and files containing the candidate's evidence. Folders should be organised in a structured way so that the evidence can be accessed easily by a teacher or moderator. This structure is commonly known as a folder tree. It would be helpful if the location of particular evidence is made clear by naming each file and folder appropriately and by use of an index called 'Home Page'.

There should be a top level folder detailing the candidate's centre number, candidate number, surname and forename, together with the unit code, so that the portfolio is clearly identified as the work of one candidate.

Each candidate produces an assignment for controlled assessment. The evidence should be contained within a separate folder within the portfolio. This folder may contain separate files.

Each candidate's controlled assessment portfolio should be stored in a secure area on the centre's network. Prior to submitting the controlled assessment portfolio to OCR, the centre should add a folder to the folder tree containing controlled assessment and summary forms.

Data formats for evidence

In order to minimise software and hardware compatibility issues, it will be necessary to save candidates' work using an appropriate file format.

Candidates must use formats appropriate to the evidence that they are providing and appropriate to viewing for assessment and moderation. Open file formats or proprietary formats for which a downloadable reader or player is available are acceptable. Where this is not available, the file format is not acceptable.

Electronic controlled assessment is designed to give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do using current technology. Candidates do not gain marks for using more sophisticated formats or for using a range of formats. A candidate who chooses to use only word documents will not be disadvantaged by that choice.

Evidence submitted is likely to be in the form of word processed documents, PowerPoint presentations, digital photos and digital video.

To ensure compatibility, all files submitted must be in the formats listed below. Where new formats become available that might be acceptable, OCR will provide further guidance. OCR advises against changing the file format that the document was originally created in. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the electronic portfolios submitted for moderation are accessible to the moderator and fully represent the evidence available for each candidate.

Accepted File Formats

Movie formats for digital video evidence

MPEG (*.mpg)

QuickTime movie (*.mov)

Macromedia Shockwave (*.aam)

Macromedia Shockwave (*.dcr)

Flash (*.swf)

Windows Media File (*.wmf)

MPEG Video Layer 4 (*.mp4)

Audio or sound formats

MPEG Audio Layer 3 (*.mp3)

Graphics formats including photographic evidence

JPEG (*.jpg)

Graphics file (*.pcx)

MS bitmap (*.bmp)

GIF images (*.gif)

Animation formats

Macromedia Flash (*.fla)

Structured markup formats

XML (*xml)

Text formats

Comma Separated Values (.csv)

PDF (.pdf)

Rich text format (.rtf)

Text document (.txt)

Microsoft Office suite

PowerPoint (.ppt)

Word (.doc)

Excel (.xls)

Visio (.vsd)

Project (.mpp)